

REMARKS

Claims 1-44 are pending in the application with this response. Claims 1-39 are rejected. The Applicant is amending claims 1, 2, 13, 17, 21, 23, 24, 30, 36, and 37. The Applicant is adding claims 40-44.

The Applicant believes that claims 13-20, 25-28, 31-34, and 37-39 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) rather than under 35 USC 102(e) and is responding accordingly.

Amendments to Clarify Invention

The Applicant has amended claims 1 and 21 to replace “about” with “of” to clarify the claimed invention.

Claim Objections

Claim 35 is objected to because of an informality, in which claim 35 appears to include the content of claim 36 because the numeration is omitted. The Applicant has amended claim 36 to include the number “36”.

Claims Rejections – 35 USC §112

Claim 35 is rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter with applicant regards as the invention. The Applicant, as discussed above, has amended claim 36 to include the number “36”, thus distinguishing the method steps of claim 35 and the computer-readable medium of claim 36. The Applicant requests reconsideration of claim 35.

Claims Rejections – 35 USC §103

Claims 1, 21, and 23 are rejected by the Office Action under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over US 2002/0128939 (Tarrant). The Applicant has amended claim 1 to include the element of “a verification component for determining whether information can be shared between entities in accordance with rights management”. None of the cited prior art teaches or even suggests this element. The Applicant has amended claim 21 to include the feature of “establishing the new business relationship with the sought entity based on the response, the response being indicative of a trust level of the sought entity by the intermediate entity **and of a**

corresponding valuation criterion, the trust level being dependent on the corresponding valuation criterion". (Emphasis added.) None of the cited prior art teaches or even suggests a response being indicative of "a corresponding valuation criterion, the trust level being dependent on the corresponding valuation criterion". Similarly, the Applicant has amended claim 23 to include the feature of "receiving a confirmation of a relationship between the at least one trusted company, the confirmation being indicative of a trust level of the unknown company by one of the at least one trusted company **and a corresponding at least one valuation criterion, the trust level of the unknown company being dependent on the corresponding at least one valuation criterion**". (Emphasis added.) The Applicant requests reconsideration of claims 1, 21, and 23.

Claims 2-12, 22, 24, 29-30, and 35-36 are rejected by the office action under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tarrant in view of US 2002/0078003 (Krysiak). The Applicant has amended claim 2 to include the features of "at least one entity trust list containing at least one characteristic of at least two of the entities, **a level of trust being gauged by the at least one characteristic**" and "at least one transactional trust list containing at least one parameter relative to an exchange between at least two of the entities through at least one degree of separation between the entities, the at least one parameter comprising **a proxy parameter, the proxy parameter being indicative of an action that a trusted party can perform on behalf of a trusting party**". (Emphasis added.) None of the cited references neither teaches or even suggests "a level of trust being gauged by the at least one characteristic" or "a proxy parameter, the proxy parameter being indicative of an action that a trusted party can perform on behalf of a trusting party". Similarly, the Applicant has amended claims 24, 30 and 36 to include the features of "querying, if the first entity is not a trusted entity and if a proxy parameter is indicative that trusted entities are permitted to forward requests to other trusted parties, the trusted entities and specifying a predetermined degree of separation", "querying, if the first entity is not a trusted entity and if a proxy parameter is indicative that trusted entities are permitted to forward requests to other trusted parties, by the second entity at least a third entity of the trusted entities associated with the second entity, and specifying a predetermined degree of separation", and "querying, if the first entity is not a trusted entity and if a proxy parameter is indicative that trusted entities are permitted to forward requests to other trusted parties, the trusted entities and specifying a

predetermined degree of separation”, respectively. Thus, Applicant requests reconsideration of independent claims 2, 24, 30, and 36.

Claims 3-12 and 29 depend from claim 2. Thus, claims 3-12 and 29 are patentable over Tennant in view of Krysiak, for at least the reasons above, and requests for reconsideration. Claim 22 depends from claim 21. However, the addition of Krysiak does not teach or even suggest the features of claim 21. Thus, Applicant requests reconsideration of claim 22.

Regarding claim 35, the Office Action admits that Tarrant and Krysiak do not specifically teach forwarding a “Do You Know” query to further [further] companies.” The Office Action further alleges that “this feature does not distinguish the invention over similar features in the prior art, and the teachings of Tarrant and Krysiak et al. would perform the invention as claimed by the applicant with either specifically teaching forwarding said query, or not.” The Applicant has amended claim 35 to include the feature of “(k) responding by the respective company to the third company with an affirmative on knowing the second company, **in response to the “Do You Know” query**”. (Emphasis added.) As amended, Tarrant and Krysiak would not “perform the invention as claimed by the applicant with either specifically teaching said query, or not.” Thus, the Applicant requests reconsideration of claim 35.

Claims 13-20, 25-28, 31-34, and 37-39 are rejected by the Office Action under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tarrant in view of Krysiak and Smith (US 2002/0152086). The Applicant has amended claim 13 to include the features of “an entity trust list containing at least one characteristic of at least two of the entities, **a level of trust being gauged by the at least one characteristic**” and “a transactional trust list containing at least one parameter relative to an exchange between at least two of the entities through at least one degree of separation between the entities, **the at least one parameter comprising a proxy parameter, the proxy parameter being indicative of an action that a trusted party can perform on behalf of a trusting party**”. (Emphasis added.) Claim 13 is patentable for at least the same reasons, as discussed above, and the Applicant requests reconsideration.

Moreover, claim 13 includes the feature of “a capability domain and activity trust level data base for each of the at least two entities, the data base having a plurality of levels of trust and a plurality of entity roles, **the capability domain and activity trust data base comprising a plurality of entries, each entry being indexed by an entity role and a level of trust, each said**

entry being indicative of a corresponding business process". (Emphasis added.) Neither Tarrant, nor Krysiak, nor Smith, nor the combination teaches or suggests a "data base comprising a plurality of entries, each indexed by an entity role and a level of trust, each said entry being indicative of a corresponding business process." Similarly, the Applicant has amended claims 17 and 37 to have the features of "the database having a plurality of levels of trust and a plurality of entity roles, the capability domain and activity trust level data base comprising a plurality of entries, each entry being indexed by an entity role and a level of trust, each said entry being indicative of a corresponding business process" and a data structure that "is indexed by the capability domain and the activity trust domain to obtain a corresponding business process", respectively. Claims 17 and 37 are patentable, for at least the above reasons, and the Applicant requests for reconsideration.

Claims 14-16 depend from claim 13, claims 18-20 depend from claim 17, and claims 38-39 depend from claim 37. The Applicant requests reconsideration of claims 14-16, 18-20, and 38-39. Claims 25-28 depend from claim 24 and claims 31-34 depend from claim 30. The addition of Smith to Tarrant and Krysiak does not teach or even suggest the features of claim 24 or 30. Thus, the Applicant requests reconsideration of claims 25-28 and 31-34.

CONCLUSIONS

The Applicant is adding claims 40-44, which are supported by the specification as originally filed. All objections and rejections have been addressed. Hence, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance, and a notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Date: March 23, 2004

Respectfully submitted,
By: Kenneth F. Smolik
Kenneth F. Smolik
Registration No. 44,344
BANNER & WITCOFF, LTD.
10 South Wacker Drive
Suite 3000
Chicago, Illinois 60606
Direct Line: 312-463-5419
Facsimile: 312-463-5001